

StreamLine

A publication of the Indianapolis Department of Public Works/Clean Stream Team



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Sewer projects incorporate value-engineering, "green" design solutions

Under Mayor Gregory A. Ballard's leadership, the Indianapolis Department of Public Works (DPW) is studying planned projects, seeking to maximize benefits and reduce costs. The goal is to achieve long-term infrastructure improvements at a cost savings to Marion County residents.

Indianapolis' Obligation

DPW's Capital Improvement Program includes the 20-year Raw Sewage Overflow Long Term Control Plan, which will meet the requirements of Indianapolis' 2006 Consent Decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

To meet the Consent Decree requirements, Indianapolis needed to invest \$1.73 billion (based on 2004 dollars) over the 20-year period between 2006 and 2025.

In addition to reducing raw sewage overflows, the Capital Improvement Program also includes projects that will improve neighborhood drainage and maintain and update the sanitary sewer system. While not all of these projects are required under the Consent Decree, they will aid the city in offering a quality of life consistent with other top U.S. cities.

Projects in progress from 2006 to 2008 were funded by a sewer rate increase approved by the City-County Council in 2005. The plan included regular rate increases to complete the 20-year plan.

A New Approach

Since Mayor Ballard has taken office, DPW has been reviewing the program's financial requirements, and this review has allowed the city to realize substantial cost savings. The Capital

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NEAR EAST SIDE TO BENEFIT FROM IMPROVEMENTS

Mayor Gregory A. Ballard, city officials and neighborhood residents broke ground on a sewer separation project on the city's near east side June 3.

More than \$10 million will be invested to bring infrastructure improvements to the neighborhood. The Indianapolis Department of Public Works and the Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development are partnering with local community organizations to separate a combined sewer system and improve crumbling curbs, sidewalks and deteriorating streets.

DPW will separate portions of the city's old combined sewer system, bringing significant improvements to the area. Separating the sewers will improve drainage and reduce raw sewage overflows into nearby Pogues Run by six million gallons per year.

"We can finally say goodbye to the white water rapids, more



commonly known as Ohio and Market streets," said Zach Adamson, president of the Willard Neighborhood Association.

Construction on both projects is scheduled for completion in 2009.

Find us on the Web at: www.indycleanstreams.org

FROM THE DIRECTOR

David Sherman

Director
Indianapolis Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works has been in the news a lot lately, and for good reason – we have been busy!

On April 9, during his State of the City address, Mayor Gregory A. Ballard announced that DPW will use value engineering and other measures to lower the cost of our sewer work by up to 20 percent, and those savings will allow for reduced sewer rate increases in the future.

Soon thereafter, an article in the Indianapolis Star highlighted the complex issues we face with a 100-year-old combined sewer system, 30,000 residents still on septic tanks, and contaminated stormwater run-off. We have our work cut out for us. But, hundreds of DPW employees and contractors are working to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and improve our city's water quality to make Indianapolis a cleaner community and a better place to live and work.

An Indianapolis Star editorial on May 13 further drove home the importance of solving the city's long-standing water quality and infrastructure problems. The editors acknowledged that these "staggering" problems are being addressed and rightfully so, "for the sake of health, economic development and quality of life."

Educating our public is an important aspect of our work, which is why we hosted the Air, Land and Water Pavilion at the Earth Day Indiana Festival in April. An estimated 20,000 festival-goers had the opportunity to learn about our programs and find out how they can do their part to clean up our waterways.

Educating future leaders also is important. I attended the "Make a Splash Indianapolis" water festival on May 8, where 300 fourth and fifth graders learned about water quality and how they can be better stewards of our water resources.

Residents and businesses in Indianapolis are beginning to see real benefits from what we've accomplished over the past several years. And, work continues. Everyone has a role in improving our waterways. Won't you join us in these efforts?

Sincerely,

David R. Sherman

UNDER CONSTRUCTION: CITY ELIMINATES SEPTIC SYSTEMS ON EAST SIDE

Years of septic system failures in two east side Indianapolis neighborhoods will soon come to an end as a result of new Septic Tank Elimination Program (STEP) projects.

One of the STEP projects, located in the Post/Rawles area will bring sanitary sewers to more than 160 homes in the area. The health department completed a survey and reported a 44 percent failure rate of septic systems in the Post/Rawles area. The conversion to sanitary sewers will resolve long-standing health and environmental concerns caused by septic systems in the neighborhood. This \$4.1 million project is one of two separate projects within the Post Road and Rawles Avenue area and is estimated to be complete by spring 2009.



Two phases of another east side STEP project will bring sewer relief to more than 400 homes. One phase is located at 10th and Mitthoefer streets, and the other is located nearby at Eustis Drive and Michigan Street. Both phases are scheduled to be complete by January 2009 with a total investment of more than \$5 million.

"When septic systems fail, human waste leaches into groundwater, backyards and neighborhood ditches and streams. That's exactly what we were seeing in the 10th/Mitthoefer neighborhood," said Gary Huddleston, STEP program manager for the Indianapolis Department of Public Works. "Not only does sewage smell and look disgusting, but it's also a health hazard for the neighborhood."

Rainy weather make septic systems failures even more problematic for residents. Standing water in septic fields is a prime breeding ground for mosquitoes, which are not only a nuisance but also can spread disease to humans and animals. "Completion of these STEP projects is a priority for the city as they truly will improve quality of life for the people in these neighborhoods," added Huddleston.

ABOUT THE CLEAN STREAM TEAM

The Indianapolis Clean Stream Team is overseeing many projects to prevent raw sewage overflows into our waterways, eliminate failing septic systems, and improve flood control and drainage.

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CLEAN STREAMS
HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

SEWER PROJECTS *(continued from page 1)*

Improvement Program will invest approximately \$750 million from 2009 to 2013, which will lessen the financial impact on citizens and result in notable environmental benefits.

An approach called "value engineering" will be employed to save more than \$100 million under the Long Term Control Plan. Value engineering is a process whereby engineers identify project goals and develop economical design solutions. They compare solutions with regard to function and cost and select the most effective and fiscally responsible option. Short- and long-term costs, construction methods and project benefits all are analyzed in the process.

"Value engineering plays an important role in efficient management of all project phases—planning, design and construction," said DPW Director David Sherman.

Improving Our Neighborhoods

One focus for the Ballard administration is to help residents whose septic tanks are failing by connecting them to the city's sewer system. Failing septic tanks pose health and environmental hazards when raw sewage leaches into groundwater, backyards and neighborhood ditches and streams. Over the next five years, the Septic Tank Elimination Program (STEP) plans to convert approximately 7,000 homes from antiquated septic systems to sanitary sewers.

DPW is finding efficiencies by coordinating drainage improvement projects in conjunction with STEP projects. From 2009 through 2013, the city will invest \$83 million in stormwater improvements and another \$132 million in STEP.

Some planned drainage improvement projects include drainage channel alignment, detention basin and wetland projects, which will meet state and federal requirements. The stormwater program also is integrating "green" solutions, such as rain gardens, vegetative swales and cisterns. All of these stormwater management methods are environmentally friendly designs that are equal to or less expensive to build and maintain, according to the EPA.

DPW is developing a new Stormwater Green Infrastructure Manual to help developers and others utilize these new methods. The manual will provide guidance and incentives for green design and may aid in reducing the size of the stormwater system.

KEY SANITARY AND STORMWATER SEWER PROJECTS:

- Begin design for Castleton Relief Sewer in 2008
- Construct \$6 million Near East Side Sewer Separation project in 2008 and 2009
- Construct \$12 million SCADA project
- Complete more than \$2 million in improvements at Eagle Creek Dam
- Convert more than 7,000 homes on septic systems to the city's sewer system – an investment of approximately \$132 million
- Upgrade Lift Station 507 in Broad Ripple – an investment of \$7 million
- Begin engineering planning for the Fall Creek/White River Tunnel in 2009
- Bid the Trickling Filter/Solids Contact project at the Belmont Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant in 2009
- Continue the Belmont-Southport Interplant Connect project
- Continue the Indianapolis North White River Flood Damage Reduction project and complete by 2010
- Begin and complete projects that will capture an additional 1.4 billion gallons of raw sewage by 2013

The Capital Improvement Program is part of the Clean Streams-Healthy Neighborhoods initiative. It is designed to curb raw sewage overflows into rivers and streams, address chronic flooding, eliminate failing septic tanks and improve quality of life in Indianapolis neighborhoods.

INDIANAPOLIS STUDENTS "MAKE A SPLASH"

Water was the theme of the day at the third annual "Make a Splash Indianapolis" water festival, which took place on a very rainy Thursday in May. Nearly 300 fourth and fifth grade students representing four Marion County schools came together at Riverside Park to learn about water quality.

Students learned about water conservation, stormwater pollution, raw sewage overflows and more through hands-on activities that were both educational and fun.

In addition to gaining newfound knowledge about water quality, the students also learned about the importance

of reusing and recycling. Lunch was served in reusable lunch bags made from recycled plastics, and each student took one home. DPW's Recycle Indianapolis program provided recycling containers for the participants to recycle their water bottles.

A special thanks to the generous sponsors who made this event possible!



TOSS OUT "FOG" TO AVOID A CLOG

Keep fats, oils and grease out of our sewers

Juicy burgers, rich desserts and crispy onion rings. What do these summer favorites have in common? Aside from being craved by many, the fats, oils and grease in these foods can contribute to sewage backups and overflows.

"When fats, oils and grease are washed down sinks, they can build up over time and eventually create clogs," said Cheryl Carlson, enforcement program manager for the Indianapolis Department of Public Works, Office of Environmental Services. "These clogs can cause backups, create odor problems and prevent sewers from safely transporting sewage to our treatment plants."

Meat fats, lard, butter, oil, margarine, baked goods, sauces and dairy products can cause clogs when dumped down the drain. Improper disposal of these substances can contribute to unhealthy and undesirable living conditions in neighborhoods. Sewer backups and clogs also attract insects and vermin, resulting in other health hazards.

For Indianapolis residents and the city, sewer backups create unsanitary conditions that are expensive to fix. In 2007, the city spent \$128,820 on fats, oils and grease-related preventive maintenance and treatment. Increased costs for the city means increased costs for ratepayers.

For more information on managing fat, oil and grease discharges, contact the DPW Office of Environmental Services at 327-2234.

Reduce Fats, Oils and Grease in our Sewers

- Dispose of food waste in the trash or compost organic waste instead of putting it down the garbage disposal.
- "Dry wipe" pots, pans and dishes before washing to minimize the amount of FOG and solids washed down the drain.
- Pour cooking fat or grease in a small container. Once it solidifies, place it in the garbage.
- Educate others on the damage that FOG can cause.
- Do not put used oil, oil-based paints, solvents or other chemicals down sewer lines or storm drains. Dispose of them at an Indianapolis ToxDrop site. For a location, visit www.indy.gov/ToxDrop.

